

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

NEWS AMERICAN

JAN 25 1978

E - 208,274

S - 283,774

'We No Longer Guess; We Know,' CIA's Colby Says

• This is the first of four articles based on an exclusive interview with CIA Director William Colby.

By KINGSBURY SMITH
News American Bureau

WASHINGTON — In the most destructive sabotaging ever conducted within a nation against its own intelligence service, the Central Intelligence Agency has been portrayed to the American people — and the world — as a sinister organization engaged in illegal activities which have included political assassination attempts, the overthrow of foreign governments and intervention in civil wars.

What is the other side of the coin? What are the good things the CIA has done for America — and the free world?

To find out, I spent an hour with CIA Director William E. Colby, who has spent a quarter of a century striving to safeguard the security of America and the political freedom of its allies and foreign friends.

I found that the CIA's covert, so-called "dirty tricks" operations, some of which Colby candidly concedes were wrongly done through an "excess of zeal," represent an almost minute part of the organization's functions. Most of CIA's attention is concentrated on intelligence gathering and analysis. It is in these fields that it has accomplished its greatest achievements.

Listening to the quiet, softspoken, trim-looking "professional's professional," who at the age of 25 parachuted behind German lines in Norway during World War II, one comes away with the impression history will record the following:

• That the "fantastic" surveillance techniques developed by the CIA may well have averted a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union;

• That the CIA information on the So-

Commentary

viet Union's nuclear weapons made possible the strategic arms limitation (SALT) agreements;

• That without that information it would have been impossible to conclude the anti-ballistic missiles' (ABM) agreement which saved the American taxpayer between \$100 billion and \$150 billion;

• That the CIA has averted foreign wars by providing information which enabled the American government to prevent the conflicts;

• That the CIA, by aiding anti-Communist political parties, helped prevent the Communists from gaining control of countries in Western Europe, Latin America and the Middle East;

• That the CIA has saved the lives of foreign political personalities, prevented the kidnaping of others, and provided a new life in America for "defectors" from Communist-ruled countries who brought invaluable information to the United States.

Following is a condensed text of the first part of the interview with Colby:

Q—What do you consider to be the outstanding achievements of the CIA?

A—"I think in the first place it is important to point out that the name of the agency is intelligence. Most of the attention goes to the covert influence operations which are really a small portion of our total effort;

"During the main days of the Cold War, they were a substantial part of the effort, but now it is about 5 per cent. That is, about 5 per cent of our budget goes for covert operations. That includes all the ones you have heard about.

"The main effort in CIA is intelligence. Now what have we done for intelligence? We have revolutionized it.

Intelligence is so different today from the normal image of the James Bond or the Mata Hari that it bears no similarity. Sure, we do have a few people collecting intelligence in the old clandestine way. And they are doing a very good job. They are dealing with foreigners who trust us with their lives, who believe that somehow they are helping their country by giving us information. Information that helps avoid wars, helps avert crises. They are supporting this better society that America represents.

"What we have achieved in the technological field is fantastic — absolutely fantastic. The U-2 was developed in this agency. I cannot go into details on the improvements since then — in photography, electronics — but what we have been able to do has changed the nature of intelligence.

"We no longer try to guess how many nuclear missiles the Soviets possess. We count them. We tell exactly where they are.

"What was achieved on the anti-ballistic missile system was made possible by our intelligence. This country was saved between \$100 billion and \$150 billion in not having to set up an anti-ballistic missile system. If we did not know through our intelligence system that the Soviets do not have any ABM systems besides the one around Moscow which is part of the agreement, we would have to build a system at a cost of between \$100 billion and \$150 billion."

Q—Would it have been possible to have the SALT negotiations without the intelligence information on Soviet nuclear capability that you provided?

A—"No, absolutely not. We insisted from the beginning on some system of inspection — monitoring. The only thing anybody could think of 10 years ago was on-site inspection, and the Soviets would not agree to it. We don't need teams to

continued

go round and look now. We look without them.

"Another area in which we have changed intelligence enormously is in the analysis. Intelligence is no longer stealing a secret and giving it to the general or the president. Today it is the assessment of the very complicated world in which we live. It involves factoring the politics, the economics and the scientific into an overall assessment of what is happening and what is likely to happen. It is not a crystal ball. It doesn't

give you the future directly. On the other hand, it helps to cover you on the existing situation and its potential consequences.

"One of the best things I have heard in a long time was a foreign leader who went back to his own country and commented with quite some respect on how detailed the President's knowledge was on some of the situations confronting us.

"That is the main business of the CIA — gathering information, putting it together and presenting it in a useful form.

That enables our President, our national leadership to operate on a basis of knowledge rather than hunches and guesses.

"We have more master's degrees and doctorates and all the rest of it — from agriculture and economics to nuclear physics — in this building than most universities do. We have the faculty to staff a large university easily. That is what intelligence is all about these days.

"In the nuclear age, intelligence is more important than ever to our country. The American people have a right to know that ours is the best intelligence in the world. Beyond a doubt.

"We share some of our information and our thoughts with friendly foreign powers and their representatives are open mouthed — just about our photographs. They are dazzling, and so is the quality of the assessment."